VOL. XXI. JANUARY 1, 1900. No. 1.

CONTENTS.

Views from the Watch Tower..... 3
Fallen from Grace vs. Collapsed..... 3
The Federation of Babylon..... 4
The Time of Opportunity is Short..... 5
The Prospect for 1900..... 5
To Him That Hath Used Shall More be Given..... 5
A Fresh Call for Volunteers..... 6
Poem: Our Elims--To My Beloved Pastor..... 7
"The Word Was Made Flesh"..... 7
"Jesus Increased in Wisdom and Stature"..... 12
Interesting Letters..... 15
Items: A Post Office Thief is Still Robbing Our Mail, etc..... 2

::page 2::

THIS JOURNAL AND ITS MISSION.

THIS journal is set for the defence of the only true foundation of the Christian's hope now being so generally repudiated,--Redemption through the precious blood of "the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a **ransom** [a corresponding price, a substitute] for all." (`1 Pet. 1:19`; `1 Tim. 2:6`.) Building up on this sure foundation the gold, silver and precious stones (`1 Cor. 3:11-15`; `2 Pet. 1:5-11`) of the Word of God, its further mission is to--"Make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery which...has been hid in God,...to the intent that now might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God"--"which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed."--`Eph. 3:5-9,10`.

It stands free from all parties, sects and creeds of men, while it seeks more and more to bring its every utterance into fullest subjection to the will of God in Christ, as expressed in the Holy Scriptures. It is thus free to declare boldly whatsoever the Lord hath spoken;--according to the divine wisdom granted unto us, to understand. Its attitude is not dogmatical, but confident; for we know whereof we affirm, treading with implicit faith upon the sure promises of God. It is held as a trust, to be used only in his service; hence our decisions relative to what may and what may not appear in its columns must be according to our judgment of his good pleasure, the teaching of his Word, for the upbuilding of his people in grace and knowledge. And we not only invite but urge our readers to prove all its utterances by the infallible Word to which reference is constantly made, to facilitate such testing.

TO US THE SCRIPTURES CLEARLY TEACH

That the Church is "the Temple of the Living God"--peculiarly "His workmanship;" that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel age--ever since Christ became the world's Redeemer and the chief corner stone of this Temple, through which, when finished, God's blessings shall come "to all people," and they find access to him.--`1 Cor. 3:16,17`; `Eph. 2:20-22`; `Gen. 28:14`; `Gal. 3:29`.

That meantime the chiseling, shaping and polishing, of consecrated believers in Christ's atonement for sin, progresses; and when the last of these "living stones," "elect and precious," shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the First Resurrection; and the Temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.--`Rev. 15:5-8`.

That the Basis of Hope, for the Church and the World, lies in the fact that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for **every** man," "a ransom for all," and will be "the true light which lighteth **every man that cometh into the world,"** "in due time."--`Heb. 2:9`; `John 1:9`; `1 Tim. 2:5,6`.

That the Hope of the Church is that she may be like her Lord, "see him as he is," be "partaker of the divine nature," and share his glory as his joint-heir.--`1 John 3:2`; `John 17:24`; `Rom. 8:17`; `2 Pet. 1:4`.

That the present mission of the Church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God's witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests of the next age.--`Eph. 4:12`; `Matt. 24:14`; `Rev. 1:6`; `20:6`.

That the hope for the World lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to **all** by Christ's Millennial Kingdom--the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified Church.--`Acts 3:19-21`; `Isa. 35`. CHARLES T. RUSSELL, Editor.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS
--ADDRESS TO--
WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY, "BIBLE HOUSE," 610, 612, 614 ARCH ST., ALLEGHENY, PA., U.S.A.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE, $1.00 A YEAR IN ADVANCE. MONEY MAY BE SENT BY EXPRESS, N.Y. DRAFT, MONEY ORDER, OR REGISTERED. FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES BY FOREIGN MONEY ORDERS, ONLY. SPECIAL TERMS TO THE LORD'S POOR, AS FOLLOWS:--

Those of the **interested** who, by reason of old age, or other infirmity or adversity, are unable to pay for the TOWER will be supplied FREE, if they send a Postal Card each December, stating their case and requesting the paper. We are not only willing, but anxious, that all such be on our list continually.

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A POST OFFICE THIEF IS STILL ROBBING OUR MAIL!

We specially request that no **money** be sent by mail. Altho this is mentioned in

every issue quite a number fail to heed it. They thus not only lose the money sent but cause themselves and us trouble and postage writing about their losses. Furthermore they trouble others who properly send Postal Orders, Drafts or Express Orders; for the mail-thief frequently by mistake takes these (which he cannot use and must destroy lest they betray him). Hence the many who do right in this matter are put to trouble even tho they suffer no financial loss. If all would observe the proper rule, the thief would be spared temptation, and he would soon cease to rifle letters addressed to us-- finding no **money** therein.

One dear Brother sent a donation in **money,** which went astray. He wrote subsequently that his thought was--This is the Lord's **money** and for the Lord's **cause** and he will protect it. He erred in this, failing to realize that his course was a tempting of Providence: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (See `Matt. 4:7`.) Nor should we tempt our weak fallen fellow-creatures.

::page 2::

ALLEGHENY CHURCH MEETINGS.

Preaching and divine worship every Sunday afternoon in Bible House chapel, No. 610 Arch street, at 3 P.M.

Cottage meetings for prayer and testimony on Wednesday evenings; and Dawn Circles for Bible Study on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings--various localities, Pittsburg and vicinity. Inquire at WATCH TOWER office.

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::R2553 : page 3::

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

FALLEN FROM GRACE VERSUS COLLAPSED.

MORE evident does it become, daily, that our Lord's declaration, "Babylon is fallen!" does not signify the outward collapse of "Churchianity;" but that nominal "Christendom" has fallen from divine favor;--just as the fall of national Judaism from divine favor, at the rejection and crucifixion of Messiah at his first **presence,** meant not the collapse at the moment of that religio-political system. The collapse of Judaism came after it had been **fallen** from divine favor for 37 years, **viz.,** in A.D. 69-70; and during that interim God's true people, "Israelites indeed," were called out by the voice of the Gospel Dispensation. And just so now, the collapse of **nominal** Christianity, "Christendom" or "Babylon," is not to be expected until A.D. 1914, tho fallen from favor since 1878. The collapse will be sudden and awful when it does come: and while only the few realize the **fallen-from-grace** condition of Babylon in the present, none will be ignorant of her collapse when it comes. But to know then will be too late so far as the little flock of overcomers is concerned;--they are all called now, during the interim, "Come out of her, **my people,** that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues"--punishment.--`Rev. 18:2,4`.

The collapse of Babylon is graphically described by the Revelator as like the casting of a great millstone into the sea, saying, "Thus [suddenly], with violence shall that great city, Babylon, be thrown down and be found no more at all." Her sudden destruction is described as a great conflagration, and the

declaration is made that it is because "the hour of her judgment [krisis]" will have come, that she will thus suffer overthrow or "plagues." "Therefore shall her plagues come in **one day** [prophetic time is a day for a year], death and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Whoever are worthy the name, "my people," will hear and obey the Lord's voice and come out of Babylon and "receive not of her plagues;" because their obedience in fleeing out as soon as they see Babylon's real condition will prove that they were never in real accord with her sins. Those who **remain** after seeing Babylon and her blasphemous doctrines in the light now shining are reckoned as endorsing the blasphemies and deserving the "plagues" most thoroughly --as much or more than the "tare" class of Babylonians, because they have greater light.

Many err in not fleeing promptly when first they realize the true condition of affairs. Some say,--I will use my office or influence in Babylon, and then obey the Lord after I have gathered some of the "wheat." They forget that obedience is better than all else in divine estimation--better even than sacrifice. Are they wiser than God that they may even for a month advantageously or safely ignore his Word? Later on they find that even the "tare" class consider them as having for a time at least "dissembled" and misrepresented their own faith as well as misrepresented the faith of the denomination which they had agreed to uphold. Their **influence** which at first might have been powerful for the truth becomes vitiated by reason of their neglect to obey God's voice--by their attempt to guide themselves and to lean to their own understanding.

Others say, I am free from Babylon in spirit, God knows! Altho my name is still on the denominational rolls, I take no interest in her affairs--my sympathies are all with the truth, and I rarely attend other meetings. But is this right--to be half out and half in

Babylon? Is this the obedience required of an "overcomer" and pleasing and acceptable to God? Surely not. He publicly entered into a **covenant** with the denomination when he joined it, and he should faithfully live up to all the conditions of that covenant until he **as publicly** renounces or cancels his membership.

Others say, I merely retain my membership in the church and sing in the choir, etc., for the sake of peace in my family: otherwise I would speedily withdraw. But is this **"overcoming,"** or being overcome? The latter, surely: it is a **balancing** of regard for God and his Word, with regard for husband or wife or children or friends and their wishes. Thus the Lord tests us, whether we love houses, lands, reputation, friends, husband, wife or children, **more than him!** We should be prompt to obey and thus to show that to us God's will is superior to every other consideration.

Additionally, we once said to a dear brother who made such a remark as the above: Brother, excuse the illustration, but it may help you to see your position on this question in its true light if I tell you of a matter which, seems to me, aptly illustrates your position in a way you have not thus far thought of it. It is this: In Chicago, at one of the great butchering establishments (perhaps at all) they have a trained bullock whose duty it is to decoy the cattle that are ready for slaughter. The bewildered cattle are naturally fearful of harm and would be difficult to drive to the butchering spot, but with the decoy bull they are easily led. He gallops up to the herd tossing his head and tail as a friendly greeting and then, wheeling around, he becomes their leader and gallops off along the narrow passage where they can go only single file. He knows well his business, and when near the killing place he steps aside into a little space provided for him alone, while the herd push one another along to their slaughter. Now, dear

brother (we remarked), you and others in the nominal churches, who know better and who merely sing, or preach, or hold some petty "office," or merely help to count another **one** on the reports of Babylon's prosperity or to give another dollar to her millions, are like the decoy bull--using your knowledge and influence to the injury and bondage of others who, seeking the right way of true liberty and life, are looking to you for counsel and being misled by your example. The brother in question at once thankfully acknowledged the force of the illustration, and requested that some of the free "Withdrawal Letters" and tracts to accompany them be sent him for his use in getting free and setting a worthy example to others.

THE FEDERATION OF BABYLON.

"Christendom" was **united** in the dark ages, and the results were terrible, every way. The more truth and reformation came in, the more did "Christendom" split up. Had the reform continued, and had the light of truth shined still more clearly, the result would have been that split after split would have occurred, until each individual Christian would have stood **free,** and all denominationalism would have perished. This would be the ideal condition; for all the **unions** of the past and present are unscriptural and tend to impede the Christian's progress. They are **mechanical** unions, and not **heart** unions: they are the

work of Satan, and not God's workmanship: they tend to prevent **heart**-union and foster errors, which otherwise would quickly die. Not until enlightened by the spirit of God's Word are any prepared to exercise the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed, and to come out from all false Christian unions or sectarian communions into that broad place which recognizes one Lord, one

faith, one baptism and one Church, **whose names are written in heaven.** And only such are prepared for proper union on the same basis as that of the primitive church of Apostolic times.

When, therefore, we from time to time in these columns allude to the growing evidences of a **federative union** among all the great denominations of Christendom, and when we point out that the Scriptures indicate such a union, let no one suppose that either we or the Scriptures **approve** of such a union, or consider that its influence will be favorable to either the truth or the "saints." Quite to the contrary, the influence will be baneful: whatever is encouraging or helpful to Babylon is proportionately injurious to the true Church. The various sects of Christendom realize that many of the doctrinal errors, which have heretofore bound their votaries helplessly and mechanically, will no longer hold as firmly as before, and they are supplanting these with new bonds of later device: **viz.,** love of respectability and pride in denominational name and prosperity--a party spirit. And instead of the discredited doctrines (which can no longer be unfurled as standards, but which must be carried along tightly closed) they are raising the standard of moral and political reform, the banner of a new crusade.

No one can say that their crusade is an evil of itself; and only the few who are **spiritually minded** (the **true** Church) in and out of their sects can so much as see that moral and political reform is a worldly work and not the commission of the Church which is anointed to preach, not such reforms, but **the cross of Christ and complete regeneration of heart.**

Those who are looking for a **union** in Christendom in which denominational names and denominational lines will be obliterated, are looking for what they will never see until the great collapse comes, and the entire "Christendom" system, social, religious, political

and financial goes down in the great anarchous trouble with which the present age will close. The **union** which will be cemented will be largely one of common sentiment and cooperation in moral and political reforms. And this federative union, as already pointed out, began in 1846 in the organization of the Evangelical Alliance. We are looking yearly for its final knot to be tied in some manner that will include with other Protestant denominations the Episcopal Church, and a **working agreement** with Papacy.

Thus the **"Image** of the Beast" (`Rev. 13`) will receive life--vigor, energy--be made active. And that activity which will seem to promise great things for Babylon, and which will actively suppress liberty and be exerted powerfully against the spread of the truths now published by us, will be but the lifting up of the great millstone preparatory to its being violently and quickly destroyed, for it will soon be evident that such a new union of church and state (wholly different from that of the past) will be a union of the classes against the masses: and it will be the rising of the masses in revolution that will, as God's agency, hurl the Babylon system to utter destruction.

THE TIME OF OPPORTUNITY IS SHORT.

The more clearly we **see** present conditions and foresee those approaching, the more it should stimulate our zeal to be and to do while we have the opportunity --for a dark night approaches, wherein no man can work. Whoever desires to lay up treasures in heaven, by voluntarily sacrificing time, money, influence and other earthly considerations for the service of the Lord by service of the

"brethren," should bestir himself, lest the harvest pass, and the summer of opportunity end, and he find that he has failed to offer his **sacrifice** which he presented to God theoretically when he was baptized into Christ's death. And whoever, having become nominally a member of the "royal priesthood," does not **offer any sacrifice** during this Gospel Day of sacrifice forfeits his place as a member of that priesthood--his name will surely be blotted out and the crown, apportioned to him on the strength of his covenant to sacrifice, will be set over to another who will appreciate and use the **privilege** of self-denial, self-sacrifice, suffering with Christ.

THE PROSPECTS FOR 1900.

It is our opinion that the year just beginning will be a very prosperous year for the truth. This is not merely "a wish, father to the thought," nor is it because the "Good Hopes" already sent in seem to give promise of funds for a wider spread of the truth; for, as an offset, we have noticed that our paper (the chief item of cost in our publications) will cost us nearly double what it did last year--in other words, a dollar will do only about sixty cents worth as compared to last year. No; but we have felt for several months past that Churchianity has reached and is at a crisis, where a cleaveage is sure to take place,--which will separate from her some true saints who hitherto have been perplexed respecting the Lord's will, but who will now gradually become convinced that "Babylon" is no longer his mouthpiece, but already spewed out of his mouth (`Rev. 3:16`), and that her evolutionary teachings are not of him but in radical opposition to his Word and plan.

We have confidence that God's time is ripe for present truth to be more widely made known among his people as a part of the gospel which is either a savor of

life unto life or of death unto death. We have confidence, too, that all the money and all the colaborers necessary will be forthcoming, and we are arranging plans accordingly. Those who cooperate will share the service and the blessings attendant; those who do not use their privileges will but mar their own blessings, but shall not hinder the work that is due to be done. "The Lord will provide!" Indeed, we expect that each year now will note rapid spread of the truth **until** "the door is shut;"--until the work is interfered with forcibly by outside influences. Then we shall understand that our work is done--that the "elect" have all been sealed, and that nought remains but to "stand" and assist others to stand. Indeed, this, as we all know, is a most important part of the present; for, while others are being reached with the truth, those already blessed are being assaulted by the Adversary, so that all may be tested and only the faithful be **able to stand.**--See `Eph. 6:10-18`.

TO HIM THAT HATH USED SHALL MORE BE GIVEN.

The "Volunteer" spirit is growing. Those who have served thus have been blessed and are more anxious for the conquest than they were for the first. They look abroad and see thousands blinded by the god of this world enlisting to kill and be killed, and they read the reports of the killed, wounded and prisoners, and the hardships endured, and the taxes to be borne; and then they say: How small is the service, how slight the hardship and suffering and self-denial our gracious King is willing to accept as "reasonable service" from us who have consecrated to him our **all** --even unto death--and to whom he has already given such rich rewards as well as promised us a share in his Millennial Kingdom. We are resolved that neither cares of this life, nor pride, nor self-ease shall hinder us from engaging in this battle against darkness and the influences of the Prince of Darkness. On the contrary, we will be yet more

vigilant, yet more enthusiastic

::R2554 : page 6::

in planting the Truth, the standard of our King, where it can be seen by many now ignorantly fighting against him and it.

Let none think of the "Volunteers" as illiterate "hand-bill-distributers." Quite to the contrary, these **"ministers of the truth"** who are reaching larger numbers and exerting a greater influence than if they occupied the chief pulpits of the land, are far above the average of those whom they serve--both in secular and in Biblical intelligence. One is a stove-manufacturer and dealer; several are storekeepers, one owning and successfully managing five stores; some are college graduates, architects and civil engineers; some are clerks holding remunerative positions of trust--one of the latter, besides doing diligent "Volunteer" work, economized rigidly his living expenses and accumulated five hundred dollars during last year, which he sent to our Society to assist in publishing more "good-tidings-amunition." Several are the chosen leaders of meetings in their various localities; several are stenographers (male and female); at least two are artists, one of these of distinction as a portrait painter; others are house-wives; others are mechanics, who, after a week of toil, find recreation and heart-refreshment by spending part of each Sunday as messengers (angels) of the Lord to carry to their "brethren" yet in Babylon the true gospel message,--"good-tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people" through "him who loved us and bought us with his own precious blood."

Plenty of worldly business can command such servants because of the pay offered; but no other religious work has ever called for and gotten volunteers of this class, nor for a work of this kind, whose only pay in the present time is the

divine blessing "a hundred fold more in this present time with persecution, -- and in the world to come eternal life"--"glory, honor and immortality." No other gospel was ever worthy of so intelligent a class of servants: but as respects this gospel its most honorable servants feel that all that they have and are, are offerings far too insignificant to testify to God their new-found appreciation of his glorious character and plan. They feel impelled to pay their vows unto the Lord, to keep their covenant

of self-sacrifice even unto death, because they have the **genuine** faith in the Lord's promises, which **works by love** and purifies the heart from pride and selfishness.

A FRESH CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

In the world's warfare defeat leads to fresh calls for soldiers: with us success calls for more "Volunteers" and more success and more blessing, "riches of grace" (with possibly more persecution and slander) and by and by "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." There is more, much more work to be done, and we are desirous that many more of the Lord's consecrated people should share the heart-cheer and character-strengthening which this service affords.

Here is the very opportunity for which you have prayed--an opportunity for serving the **truth,** and the **Lord** and the **"brethren."** You wished and prayed for the needful **talents** to present these good tidings, and you hoped and prayed for **opportunities** and for **means:** and now, behold! the Lord has provided you

all these in this "Volunteer" work. Notice that it is a **"reasonable service"** as no other is; because--

(1) It is not an **unreasonable** misrepresentation of God's character and plan and methods with drum and tambourine, and singing of hymns to concert-hall tunes, misnamed divine worship and service.

(2) It is not the **unreasonable** misrepresentation of the divine character and plan as preached in one-half the 200,000 pulpits of "Christendom" which blasphemes God's character and misrepresents his plan by declaring that only the **saints** of the present time will ever be saved--far less than one out of every thousand of the world's population;* and that the great mass, both of the living and the dead, will spend an eternity in torment indescribable.

(3) It is not the **unreasonable** misrepresentation of God's character and plan presented in the other half of the pulpits of "Christendom"--which, ashamed of their "hell fire and damnation creeds," hypocritically acknowledge them, while actually they deny them and preach **"another gospel"** of Evolution and Higher Criticism, which makes void the Word and plan of God, and repudiates the cross of Christ and all necessity for his atoning sacrifice.

(4) It is a **"reasonable service"** because it appeals only to reason and Scripture, as no other gospel message on earth or known among men appeals to these, and to no other authorities and standards. And it does this, too, in a most **reasonable manner:** not like some by making false professions and taking vows in order to get into pulpits and into college-professorships, and under good salaries, to capture the sects ("creeping into houses and leading captive silly women"), but by kindly proffering without money and without price the priceless jewel of **consistent truth** which from our own experience we know will bless every true recipient. Nor has the Lord given us cause for shame

respecting the **form** in which our messages are delivered--they are neat, creditable to the most refined who engage in the service. And in turn "the adornment of a **meek** and **quiet** spirit" which the Lord's faithful take to this humble service (laying down their lives for the brethren)

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*One in a thousand of the world's population would be 1,600,000. That many saints would be a **power** for good.

::R2555 : page 7::

is one of the strongest sermons or epistles of Christ-likeness that can be presented to those we may hope to interest, and it already has spoken loudly to those who at first were too prejudiced to read.

(5) Could there be a more blessed or a more reasonable service than this? Nay, verily! We can fancy, indeed, that the heavenly angels look down upon our privileges and opportunities and fondly desire that in divine providence it might have been their privilege to join with us in this most reasonable, most honorable and most blessed service.

THE PLAN OF CAMPAIGN FOR 1900.

Confident of the reenlistment of the veterans of 1899, we have prepared for them a new campaign which we believe they will heartily enjoy. We will get ready for Spring campaign hundreds of thousands of pamphlets which we believe you will enjoy using. We will call for Volunteers and reenlistments

about March, so please be ready.

Meantime most of the "volunteers" have plenty of work for the suitable weather between now and spring; and the spirit of the Lord--the spirit of love for the Lord, love for the truth and love for the "brethren" --is constantly constraining fresh volunteers for places not yet served with the booklet, **"Bible vs. Evolution,"** and we are printing and will continue to print, plenty of these to supply the demand.

The new booklets will be supplied only for the fields where the other distribution has been made. This **free** offer for this special work will not affect the regular selling prices of the booklets;--they are not **free** for any other kind of service, tho all are supplied at very low rates. We hope that we may have many and prompt responses to this call for Gideon's Band, armed with the Jubilee trumpet to give the joyful sound, and with lights in their vessels,--ready and willing to break the vessels, to let the light shine out while they cause the joyful sound of the real good tidings to sound throughout the land.--See `Judges Chap. VII`.

::page 7::

OUR ELIMS.--TO MY BELOVED PASTOR.

Our way winds upward on the rocky steep,
And narrow is the path our feet must tread;
We still press on through shade or noontide heat--
Pilgrims to Canaan through a desert led.

The way is rough, and weary grow our feet,
Yet faint we not--the goal is fair and sweet.

Yet, as we onward urge our weary way,
     Sometimes a sigh escapes, a tear will fall;
Our load grows heavy, and the glaring day
     And heat and wayside dust our hearts appal.
Yet our Leader loves us well and notes our sigh,
His help is sure, His presence ever nigh.

We lift our eyes, and lo! a shelving rock
     And sparkling spring and waving palms are near;
With glad and quickened feet and eager joy,
     We haste to this fair **Elim-grove** of cheer.
We loose our sandals by the brooklet sweet
And in its waters bathe our weary feet.

And as we take again our onward way,
     We pluck fair blossoms, delicate and rare,
We breathe their perfume sweet throughout the day,
     The rugged path has grown most strangely fair;
And thus our Father in His tender love,
Doth bless us and His loving-kindness prove.

And thus, dear friend, as you go on your way,
     Walking this path our loving Master trod,
With patient, trusting heart from day to day,
     Keeping the road that leads to "Home" and God,
May these blest "Elims" often cheer your heart,

That you may ever choose the "better part!"

May blossoms, too, along your path be found,
Blossoms of love, and true and kindly deed,
Most fair and sweet--fragrant with tender thoughts,
And loving gratitude--your earthly meed.
And may I hope, dear friend, **my gift** may be
One of these wayside blossoms sweet to thee?

With much Christian love, "A happy Christmas and New Year." ALICE G. JAMES,--**Illinois, Dec. 25th, 1899.**

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::R2555 : page 7::

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

--JAN. 7.--`LUKE 2:1-16`.--

"Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins."--`Matt. 1:21`.

JESUS is the topic of the International Sunday School Lesson course for the entire year 1900. It should be a very profitable study, for the more intimately we know our dear Redeemer in the light of the Scriptures the more we shall appreciate him, love him and seek to copy him. No other life than his could bear so continual and close a scrutiny, yet always be full of fresh revelations of moral dignity and character--any other life similarly studied and criticised

would reveal its seamy side of weakness, sin and ignobility.

Of the four records, only John's attempts to trace our Lord's genealogy to the heavenly source, and to show us that before he was made flesh he was a spirit being with the Father and a sharer of his glory--**a** god with **the** God. But all of the Evangelists are clear in their statement that he **"was made flesh"**--not that he remained a spirit being, and assumed flesh as clothing in which to **appear** to men, but, however explainable, that the life power of the spirit being, the Logos, became the life power of the human being, born of a woman and under the Law, subject to all the conditions and circumstances of the Jews. Matthew traces

Joseph's genealogy; for altho the statement is clear that Jesus was not the son of Joseph, nevertheless, being adopted by him as his son, he might, without impropriety, inherit through him. Luke shows the genealogy of Mary, by which our Lord was actually related, according to the flesh, to our race and to the royal family of David through the line of Nathan.*

The time of our Lord's birth was an auspicious one in several respects, and very evidently divine wisdom had exercised itself in respect to the world's affairs by way of preparation for this important event: (1) The spirit of world-conquering that began with Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was favorable to it, in the sense that it brought the various families or nations of mankind into closer contact with each other, broadening their ideas. (2) This policy had resulted in the transplanting of peoples from one land to another, and thus had made them more cosmopolitan in their sentiments. (3) Israel and Judah, thus transplanted in their captivity to Babylon, became so attached to the new conditions that comparatively few of them availed themselves of the offer of Cyrus to return to

their own land, only about fifty thousand of all the tribes, out of several millions. The Jews among the Gentiles were by no

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*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., Chap. 6.

::R2556 : page 8::

means lost and had by no means abandoned all of their hopes in the Abrahamic Covenant nor all of their faithfulness to the Mosaic Law--altho they were lax in these matters and too full of a love of gain and ease to cultivate the spirit of Israelites indeed. Nevertheless, they had their influence amongst all the nations with whom they dwelt, and were witnesses to the hopes of Israel in the one God and in a coming Messiah, the Son of God, to be the world's Deliverer. (4) The triumph for a time of the Greek Empire had brought to the civilized world a highly developed literature-- the Greek language had reached its zenith, and was the literary language of the civilized world. (5) The Roman Empire had conquered the world and was in the height of its power, and as a result there was a time of universal peace, and hence a more favorable time than any before for the announcement of the Gospel and for the safety of its representatives in passing from nation to nation. (6) Israel itself had reached probably its highest development, intellectually, morally and religiously, and additionally we are told in the Scriptures that "All men were in **expectation"** of the Messiah's coming.--`Luke 3:15`.

It was just at this most appropriate time, as divinely arranged for, that Caesar Augustus, the Roman Emperor, issued his decree respecting the taxing of his worldwide empire. The decree was not merely an assessment of taxes, but was rather a census, or enrollment for taxation. But instead of sending assessors to

the people, according to the present custom, the arrangement then was that every male citizen must report himself at the headquarters of his own family line. This was the occasion for the coming of Joseph and his espoused wife, Mary, the mother of Jesus, to Bethlehem, their native city or family city, for they were both of the house of David (tho through different lines), and Bethlehem was "the city of David." Thus in a providential manner and by a decree over which they had no control whatever, Joseph and Mary were brought to the very city in which most appropriately the great heir of David should be born, as had been foretold by the prophet.--`Micah 5:2`.

The noting of these little incidentals by which divine providence prepared for our Savior's birth and for the sending forth of the Gospel message, are strengthening to the faith of the Lord's people. Realizing God's care in the past over even the little things, gives a foundation for confidence in his wisdom and provision for the features of his plan which are yet future--the fulfilment of all the exceeding great and precious promises which centered in him who was born in Bethlehem. And so also a realization of the divine providence in the larger affairs of the divine plan stimulates faith also in the Lord's providences as respects the personal and more private affairs of his people. Let us more and more realize that, as even the smallest incidents connected with the birth of our Savior were ordered of the Lord, so also he is both able and willing to order all of the affairs of his spiritual children. Let us reason with the Apostle that, if God loved us while we were yet sinners, so as to make such careful provision for our redemption, much more now that we are no longer rebels, aliens, strangers, foreigners, but have become his sons, fellow-heirs with Christ and all the saints, we may have **confidence** in his love and in his providential care, that according to his promise all things shall work together for good to them that love him--to the called ones according to his purpose. --`Rom. 5:8-10`; `8:28`.

The same decree that brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem brought many others of the numerous family of David, and as the inns or hotels of that time were comparatively limited in numbers and in capacity, it is not surprising that the inn proper was full of guests when Joseph and Mary arrived. Indeed, it was rather the custom for many travelers to carry with them their own lodging outfit, and to provide for their own conveniences in the courtyard connected with the inns. And hence the experiences of Joseph and Mary were by no means exceptional. When therefore the Babe Jesus was born, a manger became his most convenient cradle.

The city of Bethlehem still exists, and probably

is not so dissimilar to what it was in that day, for in that land customs seem to have changed but little in centuries. A certain grotto is claimed to be the one which nineteen hundred years ago was the stable of the inn, and a certain stone manger is shown which, it is claimed, was the one in which the Babe Jesus was laid. Over this has been erected a Catholic church, and various ceremonies are continually performed in and about and connected with "the sacred manger." With such ceremonies we can feel little sympathy, believing them to be rather of the nature of idolatries. To us the center of interest is not the holy ground on which our Savior trod, nor the holy manger in which he lay as a babe, nor his holy mother; yea, tho we reverence his flesh, and are deeply interested in all that pertains thereto, especially in all its experiences, from the time of its consecration to death, at baptism; nevertheless, our still greater interest is in our risen Lord, the new creature perfected, the spiritual One, far above manhood, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named--next to the Father, and exalted to his right hand of power. The Apostle voices this sentiment well, saying, "Tho we have known Christ after the flesh,

yet now henceforth know we him [so] no more"--our knowledge of him as the risen and glorified Lord and Savior thoroughly outshines all of our interest in his earthly life. (`2 Cor. 5:16`.) And yet his earthly life is interesting and profitable to us, as we have seen and shall see.

Had the people assembled at Bethlehem realized who this was that had come to their city--that he was from the heavenly courts, that he was the Logos made flesh, that he had come to "save his people from their sins"--how gladly they would have welcomed him into the inn and have given to his use and comfort its choicest apartments! But they knew him not, and hence lost this great privilege of ministering to him. Similarly, in every city and town where the Lord's people are (his true saints), there are many who would make them welcome and give them the best at their disposal, did they but recognize them as the messengers of Jesus and of the Heavenly Father; but as the Apostle says, "The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." (`1 John 3:1`.) The disciple must not expect to be above his Lord, and hence, even when going upon missions of mercy and benevolence and as ambassadors for God, we should expect that the Lord's providence would furnish for us, not the most palatial conditions, but more probably very humble conditions. And when we find it thus we should rejoice that to some extent at least we have experiences which harmonize with those of our Lord. The Lord's people will obtain a blessing in proportion as they are prepared to receive all opportunities for God's service as divine favors and to appreciate them, no matter how humble the conditions: and it is noteworthy that neither Joseph, nor Mary, nor Jesus, nor the disciples, nor the Evangelist who recorded the incident, offers the slightest complaint or suggestion of dissatisfaction with the arrangement provided by divine providence. In proportion as they would have felt dissatisfied with the arrangements provided, in that proportion the divine plans would not have worked for their good.

The vicinity of Bethlehem is a pastoral country, and today is covered with flocks. It was the custom at that time for the shepherds to remain with their flocks by night as a guard against thieves as well as against wild beasts. It was in this vicinity that David (afterward king), when a shepherd-boy protecting his flocks, slew on one occasion a lion and at another time a bear. The shepherds as a class were not particularly well educated people as respects schools, and yet many of them were thoughtful and thus secured, in their leisure time while watching their flocks, by reflection and by conversation, considerable knowledge, so that they might be termed an intellectual and thinking class of people--their minds being turned more to reflection on large subjects than are the minds of some who are constantly immersed in trade and mechanics. The shepherd whom God honored in making him king of his typical kingdom, was a great poet, and evidently much of his time while shepherding was given to the muse, and one of his most beautiful poems (`Psalm 23`) represents Jehovah himself as the Shepherd of his people,--his flock, for which he cares. It was to men of this thoughtful class, and no doubt men familiar with David's Psalms, and with the Messianic hopes therein set forth, that the Lord sent the first message respecting his Son made flesh.

The description of the appearance of an angel, and of the fear which the brightness of his countenance engendered, is both simple and natural. All mankind more or less feels instinctively a fear of the supernatural, a trepidation at the very thought of being in the presence of the holy angels. And this is proper as well as natural, for all realize their own imperfections through the fall, fearing more or less that the results to themselves would be unfavorable if divine justice were laid to the line and to the plummet in respect to their affairs. All seem instinctively to realize their need of mercy at the hands of him with whom we have to do. And so it was with these shepherds; they were affrighted as they beheld the heavenly visitor in their midst; but his message was not one of justice nor in any sense of condemnation, but of divine mercy. He soothed

them with the words, "Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." Can we wonder that joy took

the place of fear in their hearts as they heard the gracious words? Surely not. And so it is with all who from that day to the present time have heard this true Gospel message, not merely with the outward ears, but truly, with the ears of their understanding--comprehending it.

How false and how sad has been the understanding of this message by many of God's people as it has echoed to them down the ages! How few have heard it gladly, appreciatively! How remarkable that nearly all of the different churches and their thousands of ministers and hundreds of thousands of Sunday School teachers should unite in a **complete contradiction** of this message of the angels--a contradiction which not only wounds their own sentiments and grieves their own hearts, but which robs our dear Savior's mission of nine-tenths of its majesty, and thoroughly dishonors and maligns the name of our gracious Heavenly Father by its misrepresentation of the salvation which he has provided in Christ Jesus.

Some perhaps may be surprised, and even shocked, at such an arraignment of the message which they and other well-meaning but blinded Christians are delivering in the name of the gospel--for the word "gospel" is derived from the words "good tidings." We are quite ready to believe that the vast majority of those who promulgate the **bad tidings** of eternal misery, as being the divine message and sentence to the vast majority of mankind, are wholly unaware of how seriously they misrepresent the divine character and government in the message which they carry to men;--they misstate the Gospel, not of intention, but of blindness, the very blindness mentioned by the Apostle as originating

with the great Adversary--the blindness by which he blinds the minds of the vast majority, to hinder them from realizing the glorious light of God's goodness revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord.--`2 Cor. 4:4`.

O, if we could only get all true Christians to study this tenth verse of our lesson, and to see the depths of its significance, it would quickly revolutionize the teachings of Christendom! But as our Lord declared, some of the deep things of the divine plan are hidden from many of the wise and prudent according to the course of this world, and are revealed only to the humble--the babes. Nevertheless, the testimony of God standeth sure, and all whose understandings have been opened and who have been enabled to comprehend some of the lengths and the breadths, and the heights and the depths of God's love, may rejoice that the ignorance of the world in general on this subject and the opposition of the great Adversary who is blinding them, cannot continue forever, but must soon give place, when the Lord's due time shall come;-- when he who died on Calvary for the world's redemption shall begin his glorious reign by binding that old serpent, the devil, Satan, that he should deceive the nations no more for the thousand years of the Millennial reign. Then all shall see out of obscurity; then all shall discern what at present is the privilege of only the favored few to see, respecting the divine character and plan--that the message of the angel was true, every word of it--that the grand results to flow from the birth of the Savior in Bethlehem justified the message sent by the great Jehovah,--a good message of great joy which eventually shall be to all people-- whose enlightenment and blessing shall have no hindrance, no restriction, and as a result all shall come to a knowledge of the truth and to an opportunity of availing themselves of the grace, mercy and peace provided for **all** in the great salvation secured by the ransom-sacrifice of our Lord Jesus.

The angel further explained his great Gospel message, showing its basis, and declaring that all the good things mentioned should come to pass because the

Savior, Messiah, had been born--the one so long looked for in Israel, the promised seed of Abraham in whom not only Israel should be blessed and exalted to honor, dignity and cooperation, but in whom also "all the families of the earth should be blessed." And let us here remark that the order of presentation used by the heavenly messenger, and evidently divinely ordered, is the proper presentation of this subject which should be adopted by all who seek to be used of the Lord as his ambassadors in the calling of the elect Church. First, there is the grand pronouncement of divine favor and blessing, that it is a cause for joy, and that ultimately it shall extend to every creature; secondly, there is the specific explanation of how all this is to be accomplished--through a Savior, a Deliverer, who, as stated in our Golden Text, in order to deliver his people from the wages of sin, death, into eternal life and blessing, must first of all save them **from** their sins. And we see from other Scriptures that this salvation **from** our sins signifies not only the payment on our behalf of the penalty for Adamic sin, but also, subsequently, man's instruction in righteousness and lifting out of sin; in which uplift each one is required to cooperate to the extent of his will and of his ability.

So all teaching of the grace that is to come to mankind should be coupled with the philosophy of the salvation--the Savior made flesh and the flesh devoted or sacrificed for our sins, and the Savior glorified, that in due time after the selection of his Church he might, with her, according to the divine plan, establish his Kingdom of righteousness for the uplifting of the world of mankind out of ignorance, superstition and general degradation into which the great Adversary

has gotten them through the fall and through his subsequent blinding and misleading. In this connection it is well to remember that our Lord's name,

Jesus, signifies **Savior,** and that all who would be of the elect Church must have the spirit of the Bridegroom (as well as by faith be covered with the garment of his imputed righteousness): and that his spirit is one of **opposition to sin to the extent of self-sacrifice.** We also are to "resist unto blood [death] **striving against sin."** --`Heb. 12:4`.

Then the angel gave the shepherds an intimation of the humble conditions under which this great King of earth was born into the world--as a babe, wrapped in swaddling bands and lying in a manger. This was necessary, not only to their identification of Jesus, but necessary also to bring down their thoughts from the great and grand **results** to its humble **beginnings,** lest they should be misled in their expectations. And as it is with every part of the divine plan, so also it should be in respect to all of our proclamations of the same. We are not only to tell of the future glory and greatness and grandeur, but we are to tell also of the present humiliation--not only of our Savior who humbled himself to take a low estate amongst men, and to die for our sins, but also to point out that the "elect" are called to walk in his footsteps, under similarly humiliating circumstances--to suffer with him, if they would reign with him; to die with him, if they would live with him. And thus also the prophets spoke not only of the glory that should follow, but also of the sufferings of Christ (head and body) which must precede the glory. (`1 Pet. 1:11`.) The lesson to every one who has ears to hear it is, "No cross, no crown." Let us, then, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and rejoice in every step of the humiliation, that he may exalt us in due time to share the glories of his Son our Lord, and to share with him the grand work of blessing all the families of the earth.

It was a fitting climax that, after the one angel had told the surprised shepherds of the good tidings of great joy for all people and was ready to depart, he should be joined by an angelic host, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and

on earth peace, good will toward men." This was but a reiteration of the Gospel message already delivered. It declared that the work which should be accomplished by the babe just born, should redound to the highest glory and honor of Jehovah God, his Father. It declared also that through this work to be accomplished by Jesus should come to earth divine good will and consequently peace, --and all that these would imply in the way of blessings of restitution and privilege of attaining everlasting life. But how much in conflict with all this are the erroneous theories which have gained credence in Christendom, which teach that, notwithstanding the ransom which our Lord Jesus gave, and notwithstanding the turning aside of the original sentence upon our race as the result of the propitiation for our sins accepted by the Father, the vast majority of the human family will nevertheless, to all eternity, be in rebellion against God, and in torture will continually blaspheme his name;--and that without ever having had a full, reasonable opportunity to know the Savior or to accept his salvation. How strange that any should think that such a plan would be glory to God in the highest!

How strange that any should **refuse to see** the very plain statement of the Scripture that God has provided through Christ that every member of the human family shall have a full opportunity of coming to a knowledge of the truth, and then of relinquishing sin and of accepting new life of righteousness under the New Covenant--and that then whoever still refuses and will not submit himself to this righteous arrangement shall be utterly destroyed from amongst the people-- in the Second Death,--that none will be suffered to live in sin and opposition to God to blemish any part of God's dominions, but that all the incorrigible shall be as tho they had not been. In no other way can we possibly imagine that the time will ever come when there will be full peace among men. "There is no peace for the wicked, saith my God."

The only solution which God offers respecting the establishment of peace is in

connection with the establishment of his Kingdom, for which our dear Redeemer taught us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." That will mean peace in its fullest and most absolute sense. The Scriptural proposition does not include the violation of

::R2558 : page 11::

any man's will, but merely the offering through Christ of an opportunity for his everlasting blessing and peace, or his cutting off in the Second Death if he fails to appreciate the divine offer.

The shepherds having heard of God's grace manifested their interest by visiting and paying their homage to the Savior: and so each one who has heard of the grace of God with an appreciative heart can do nothing less than **seek** the Lord and do him reverence and serve his cause by proclaiming the gracious message with which he has been favored. Let us each do so, and thus more and more increase in our hearts the joys of the Lord and our appreciation of his grand gospel.

Respecting the date of Jesus' birth, we hold that it was about Sept. 25th to Oct. 1st B.C. 1, and that the annunciation (`Luke 1:28`) was nine months earlier, namely Dec. 25th B.C. 2. The evidences **re** this position are given in detail in MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II., pages 54-62.

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::R2558 : page 12::

"JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM AND STATURE."

--JAN. 14.--`LUKE 2:41-52`.--

**"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and man."**

MUCH peculiar speculation has been indulged in respecting the childhood, boyhood and young manhood of our Lord Jesus, with which we have no sympathy whatever. The Bible student should confine himself to the Bible record, and not give loose rein to imagination and speculation more likely to be untrue than correct. Had the Lord foreseen necessity for information respecting this period of our Savior's career he undoubtedly would have provided for it in the inspired record. This does not imply that there was nothing noteworthy or commendable in our Lord's earlier life, but rather that by comparatively ignoring this the Lord would point us more particularly to the three and a half years of public ministry following his baptism, in Jordan, and by the holy spirit. In a word, the Lord thus points out that it was not the **man** Jesus whose words and acts were valuable to us and lessons for our emulation, but the words and acts of **Christ** Jesus, the **Anointed** Jesus-- Jesus after he had been anointed with the holy spirit without measure. Nevertheless, keeping strictly within the lines of the little that is written in the Scriptures we may draw some valuable and helpful lessons from the boyhood and young manhood of our Master.

Nothing is known respecting the first twelve years of our Lord's life, except that under divine direction his mother and foster-father took him down into Egypt, out of the reach of Herod, where they remained with him for a few months until after Herod's death, returning then to their home city, Nazareth in Galilee. It will be remembered that the occasion of the flight into Egypt was Herod's fear that a king should arise in the family of David, in harmony with the Jewish traditions, and that thus Herod's own family would be ousted from

the kingly position. Herod was not of the family of David, nor a Jew at all--he was of the family of Esau, Jacob's brother. The story of the wise men coming from the East seeking a new-born king of the Jews will be remembered, and now Herod, learning of their mission, urged that when they had found the infant they sought they should inform him, Herod feigning that he also desired to do homage to the new king. But the wise men, under divine direction, ignored Herod's request. Subsequently, learning some of the particulars respecting the birth at Bethlehem, Herod caused the death of the male-children of that city of two years old and under--thus endeavoring to insure the death of the newborn king. It is not at all probable that the number of babes slaughtered under this decree was great; as the population of Bethlehem was small the number of male children of such an age would necessarily be few.

The Golden Text informs us that Jesus grew like any other boy--that his development was gradual, both as respects physical and intellectual stature. We are not, therefore, to think of Jesus in boyhood's days as a sage a teacher, a healer, etc., as we find him subsequent to his anointing with the holy spirit. Nevertheless, we may properly suppose that the **perfect** boy would in many respects be keener and brighter than the average boy who inherits sundry imperfections from the fall.*

The testimony respecting Mary and Joseph leaves no doubt that they were pious people, and this is confirmed by the first verse of this lesson, which informs us that it was their custom to go every year to the Feast of the Passover: this requirement of the Law was observed by the most devout Jews only. It is as unnecessary as it is improper for us to go beyond the Scriptural declarations on this subject, and to assume, as some do, that Mary herself was miraculously conceived and born free from sin. Indeed, if we had no record testifying to Mary's piety the fact that she was honored by the Lord above all other women, in that she was chosen to be the mother of Jesus according to the

flesh, would prove her nobility of character and purity of heart;--for it is not even supposable that the Lord would so specially honor, bless and use any other than a noble character. Whom the Lord uses we may safely esteem honorable.

Altho the Jewish Law does not so stipulate, tradition informs us that it was the custom to consider every boy who had fulfilled his twelfth year as "a Son of the Law," and to a certain extent from that age amenable to the requirements of the Law: and the narrative of our lesson seems to confirm this tradition, telling us that when Jesus was twelve years of age (in his thirteenth year) he accompanied the family to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem. Is there not a lesson here for all godly parents, suggesting that the training of the infancy period should be of such a character as to prepare the child for the consideration of sober and religious matters at the very threshold of boyhood? We think there is. And we think it a serious mistake made by some well-intentioned parents when they conclude that their children of twelve years have sufficient mind to have grasped the elementary principles of a secular education and to be prepared for higher studies of a secular character, but unfit for higher religious studies. The children who are ready at that age for higher secular studies have already been carefully instructed along elementary lines; and if any are unprepared for higher studies in religious matters it is

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*See MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. V., Chap. 4.

at least possible that their elementary religious training may have been neglected by their divinely appointed instructors--their parents. No Christian

parent can avoid this his natural responsibility toward his children --in moral and religious training as well as in the secular and physical.

The Feast of the Passover continued seven days, but it was the custom for many of the pilgrims from distant parts to remain over only two days, until after the principal ceremonies. It is probable that Joseph and Mary, in company with their kinsfolk, started on the return journey on the third day of the feast. It was customary for the women of a caravan to move on ahead, the men coming after, and a boy of Jesus' age might be with either of the parents and not be missed until nightfall; and so it seems to have been in this case. As one day had been spent in the journey, so another day was spent returning, and a third day in searching throughout the city; finally they found Jesus in the Temple, sitting with the teachers of the Law, the "Doctors." This was not so unusual as might at first appear; for at that time information was gained less from books and more from oral teaching, and the Doctors of the Law were supposed to be ready to instruct all who desired information, especially during the holy Passover week. Many young men availed themselves of such opportunities, and the custom seems to have been for the Doctors to sit on a special semi-circle of seats, while before them were low benches for the older students: the younger boys sat on the ground, literally "at their feet." Thus Paul, as a youth, was a pupil to Gamaliel, or, as the record reads, "sat at the feet of Gamaliel," to learn of him. Gamaliel was one of the chief Doctors of the Law in his day.

We are not to understand that the boy Jesus was bold, and that he went before the learned men of his day to denounce them as ignorant and as incapable teachers, and to show himself off, as some precocious but ill-trained youth of today might attempt to do. On the contrary, we are to suppose the boy Jesus to have a well-balanced mind, which probably recognized the fact that he had lived but few years in the world and had comparatively small experience in life, and that he by no means knew all, but recognized many questions upon

which he would like to have further information, and that he asked his questions honestly, with a desire and hope of obtaining satisfactory answers from the teachers who "sat in Moses' seat."

The nature of the questions is not stated, but the time and surroundings would seem to indicate that they were of a religious character, and that the mind of Jesus was already grappling with the great questions which properly belonged to him as a member of the Jewish race to which God had made certain great and

::R2559 : page 13::

precious promises as the Seed of Abraham;--promises of divine blessing under Messiah, of exaltation to be the chief nation of the world, and of the subsequent privilege of blessing all nations and of being the mediaries through whom all mankind might be brought to the knowledge of God and to his service. From what we know of the operations of our own minds at the age mentioned, we may presume that Jesus was brimful of questions respecting the hopes of Israel, and no doubt from his mother he had received some intimation at least that divine providence had indicated that he himself was to bear some important part in connection with the fulfilment of the Scriptures; and he was seeking to know the part marked out for him by the Heavenly Father in the testimony of the Law and the Prophets.

Altho he did not have a Bible in his home, that he could consult respecting the divine testimony, he did have the common privilege of the youth of his day of attending meetings in the one little synagogue of Nazareth, which was but a small country town. There, from Sabbath to Sabbath, he heard the Law read and to some extent commented upon, sometimes also the psalms and prophecies. With these sources of information the eager mind of the boy had

grappled, and now, on the occasion of his first visit to the great city of Jerusalem, nothing attracted him so much as the Temple and its symbolical services, and happening upon a court or chamber in which the great questions of the Law and the Prophets were being discussed by the ablest teachers of the time, Jesus became so deeply interested and enthused in the Bible study that seemingly he forgot all earthly things, so intent was he in studying about the Heavenly Father's business--the plan of God, in which he himself was to be so principal an actor.

Naturally his questions would be deeper and more logical than those of other boys of his age, and naturally the Doctors of the Law would be deeply interested in him because of this in conjunction with the modesty which we may be sure accompanied it. And as during these feasts great hospitality was exercised, especially toward strangers from a distance, Jesus was probably entertained by one and another of these new-found friends.

The narrative records that, when found by Joseph and Mary, Jesus was both **hearing** the Doctors and **asking** them questions. There is a valuable lesson here for all young persons respecting their conduct toward their elders and instructors. How different the thought we get from this statement than we would have gotten had it read that they found Jesus **instructing** the Doctors, or attempting to teach them. We

do not doubt for a moment that the Doctors were as much instructed by Jesus as he was by them, possibly more so on some points at least; nor do we doubt that if they were truly great men they would be humble-minded enough to receive instructions from any one-- even from a child; and it is even intimated in the context that they asked Jesus certain questions, "and were astonished at

his understanding and his **answers."** In both cases the proceeding was that of deference to the other, as implied in the asking of the questions: Jesus having deferred to the Doctors and asked them questions which manifested his depth of mind and clearness of understanding and logical reasoning, led them in turn to ask questions of him.

This question plan we commend to all of the dear friends of the truth as a wise and proper one, no less to us of today than to the boy Jesus and to the Doctors of the Law. We have seen instances in which some of the Lord's dear people have greatly injured their influence in the truth by display of too large a degree of self-confidence, **self-assurance,** in speaking of the divine plan to others--especially to the learned. Meekness is a jewel wherever found, and is especially desirable as an adjunct and sling for the truth. Let the truth be shot forth with all the force **it** can carry, but always with meekness and humility; and the question form of suggesting truth will often be found the most forceful.

Naturally Joseph and Mary were astonished to find their little son in the company of and receiving consideration from the greatest teachers of their day, and probably nothing was said to Jesus publicly respecting their disappointment and their subsequent search for him: probably when alone Mary upbraided him for his neglect to be with the caravan: yet she did this in a very kind and moderate manner, which seemed to indicate that it was a very unusual occurrence, which in turn speaks to us of parental obedience on the part of Jesus.

Mary's expression, "Behold, **thy father** and I have sought thee sorrowing," has been questioned by some as being a confession that Joseph was the **father** of Jesus, but we answer, Not so; it would be unreasonable to suppose (1) that Luke would particularly trace the genealogy of Jesus through Mary, and ignore Joseph, and subsequently imply that Joseph was the father of Jesus; (2) Joseph

having accepted Mary, accepted also her son, Jesus, and became his foster-father, and under just such circumstances today the child would be taught to consider such an one a parent, and to call him "father." (3) It is not at all probable that the story of the immaculate conception of Jesus was ever made known to any but the closest members of the family, and it is highly improbable that the subject had ever been discussed with the boy Jesus, only twelve years of age,--nor would it have been proper to do so. Mary's language, therefore, is entirely consistent with all the facts set forth in the Gospel narrative.

Quite possibly the mind of the boy Jesus, while investigating the subject of his own responsibilities toward the Heavenly Father and his plan, had wondered whether or not his mission might not in some degree begin with his thirteenth year, since at that time he was recognized as a "son of the law." Quite possibly some of his questions before the Doctors of the Law were along this line, and quite probably he had finally about reached the conclusion that the types of the priestly office indicated clearly that his mission would not begin until he was thirty years of age. His reply to Mary's chiding was along this line: Did you not expect me to be about my Father's business? Did you not know that I had reached the age when I am a "son of the Law," and that therefore certain responsibilities have come upon me in respect to the Heavenly Father and his Word and his plan? And then, as tho remembering the conclusion that he had just reached in discussing the subject with the Doctors, he broke off the conversation, yielded himself to their wishes, and accompanied them to Nazareth, making (so far as recorded) no further suggestion of any other than the ordinary course of life until he had attained the age of thirty years. This is expressed in the words, "And he was **subject** unto them." Joseph and Mary realized clearly that the boy was more than ordinary, very extraordinary indeed, yet they did not fully comprehend the situation nor fully grasp the import of his words. Nevertheless, Mary treasured this with the other peculiar testimonies

respecting him in her heart, and doubtless it was from her lips that Luke received the information contained in our lesson.

Tradition declares that Joseph died while Jesus was yet young, and that the latter took up the carpenter's trade and became the support of the family. This finds some support in the Scriptural testimony where Jesus himself is called a carpenter, and his mother and brethren are mentioned, but Joseph is ignored. (`Mark 6:3`.) Furthermore, no reference is made to Joseph in connection with our Lord's ministry, tho his mother and his brethren are several times mentioned. It is quite probable, then, that the long period of eighteen years of our Lord's life, from the time of the incident of this lesson to the time of his baptism, was spent in the performance of the ordinary duties of life. What a thought this gives us with respect to our Lord's development of **patience**--patiently waiting until the Father's time should come and he should begin his ministry; patiently studying meantime, as best he could, to know more and more of the Father's will

and plan; patiently waiting for the baptism of the holy spirit, which would enable him to fully comprehend the situation and his own personal relationship to it. What a lesson there is here for all his followers, and everyone of us may well realize the truth of the words, "Ye have need of patience," and again, "Let patience have her perfect work." What a lesson there is for us also in the thought that we are not to attempt to hasten the divine plan, but to wait patiently for its unfolding--not to attempt to begin any work for the Lord unless we are sure that his time has come, and that he has called us to do it; then, like our Lord, to be instant in season and out of season, when convenient and when inconvenient, under favorable and unfavorable conditions; to do with our might what our hand has found to do,--what the Lord has called us to do. And we

gather the further thought that the most humble forms of labor are honorable when they are ours in harmony with God's providence.

Happily for us, we are not born under the Law nor under the limitations which hinder us from receiving the call and responding to it before thirty years of age. On the contrary, under the New Covenant of **grace** it is our privilege to present our bodies living sacrifices to the Lord's service at as early an age as our knowledge of divine things and our enlightened judgments will permit. We, instead of waiting to grow to the fulness of stature mental and physical, are permitted to begin at once, as members of the Royal Priesthood, and to be growing at the same time we are serving. But let us not forget the necessity for growth,

::R2560 : page 15::

--adding to faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness love.-- `2 Pet. 1:5-8`.

"In malice be ye **children,** but in understanding be ye **men."**--`1 Cor. 14:20`.

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::R2560 : page 15::

INTERESTING LETTERS.

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--In regard to the work here in Boston the report is good. The Volunteer work is blessing all who engage in it and goes on grandly. Scarcely a Sunday but that we distribute the tracts at some church

where the preacher's theme is Evolution. Two Sundays ago the Pastor of Tremont Temple preached a sermon advocating the doctrine of Evolution. This is the largest Protestant church in New England (congregation of 3000 and over), and the Pastor is the gentleman who notified police headquarters last June to have a stop put to further distribution of our tract. But he did not succeed. We are finding more work than was at first anticipated and are giving more books. Our report for month of November is as follows:--Nov. 5th in Dorchester 11 churches, 1024 booklets; Nov. 12th in W. Roxbury and Jamaica Plain 14 churches, 986 booklets; Nov. 19th in Dorchester and Roslindale 18 churches, 1269 booklets; Nov. 26th in Newton 13 churches, 1444 booklets; also in Brookline during month 4 churches, 154 booklets; total of 60 churches, 4877 booklets; average 81.2+. We find churches larger than we anticipated. Quite a number with congregations of from 300 to 600 which accounts for our using more booklets than expected as well as the larger average. We still have 25 to 30 (brethren and Sisters) engaged in work, and tho we have accomplished a good work, the end is not yet. We are anxious to do all the important towns accessible by electric cars, provided you can keep us supplied. We leave that part for you to decide. Unquestionably all who work are receiving blessings, and are being built up in zeal and love in the Lord's service.

Sr. G. desires to be remembered. Your brother, in love and service of our Redeemer,
ALEXANDER M. GRAHAM,--**Massachusetts.**

[We are filling orders right along. Let the good work proceed. God bless the "Volunteers." EDITOR.]

DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--I am glad that at last I have concentrated my

mind enough to write to you. Not till Mrs. Boehmer was here did I read and study anything in the truth so much as to do me any good, but while she was here my whole attention was turned. She gave me Vol. I. of M. DAWN but at first I could not read it without a great deal of will power. I read it only to show her I used the gift--it seemed so uninteresting. But at last it grew more interesting and I devoted most all of my time to reading it and I gave up almost all of my play especially with everybody but my brother and sister. (Do you consider this wrong on my part?) And I went to all the DAWN Circles and meetings here while she was with us, and mamma said the holy spirit was upon me.

When Sister Boehmer left us all of my holy interests seemed to die out of me. I could read nothing Scriptural so that I could remember it or act upon it in my daily course of life. I think the reason why God let it happen so was because I got to thinking I was far ahead in the race and looked boastfully down on my neighbors. (Don't you think so, too?) But I went to meeting every Sunday and learned O, so much good! from Brother Wright and I think he is the best leader that could be chosen--that is, a human leader. But I could remember nothing through the week.

Now here is another case: A large "tough" is always trying to catch us for no reason at all but he claims for an excuse that we throw stones at him, but we did not. I wrote to Bro. Boehmer about it and he said I should avoid him as best I could, and in doing this I am obliged to run sometimes or get hit. Now do you consider this right or wrong? Twice we stopped and asked him what he wanted but he only hit us.

When Bro. Boehmer was here he said it would do me good to enter a gymnasium which I did the 1st. of Nov. It is in a Congregational Church; I am also entitled to a privileges of boys' club and six lectures. Do you think I will

fall into wrong there?

Here is $1 which will at least be enough to make

::R2560 : page 16::

one WATCH TOWER which will help some one along just like the TOWER of Nov. 1. issue helped me along; especially the articles about Nehemiah which induced me to write. So many things fit my case exactly,--like where it says while we are in the truth we will be assailed the most, and when we get drowsy and lazy about studying the truth we will not be assailed. This is exactly right because it went so with me and I shall be happy in the hardest of earthly troubles. Your remark that each should build the walls near his home, has opened my eyes enough to see that I was in the wrong, because I do better in school and away from home than I do at home. Now I will try to do the best I can at home but will not lose my good part away from home.

I felt like opening my whole heart to you, and I have done it with the best intentions. I hope that your answer to this letter will come soon and bring tidings that will do me good.

Yours sincerely, HUGO KUEHN,--**Ohio.**

[REPLY:--I am always deeply interested in the young who give their hearts to the Lord. My Christian life began at about the same age as your own (13), and I know how great a blessing it is to become a soldier of the cross at an early age. At no time do we more need divine wisdom and grace than in boyhood and entering manhood, and how comforting it is to all such to be able to realize that having committed their all to the Lord he is caring for them, guiding and shaping their affairs in the course which will be most to their advantage as

respects the present and the eternal life.

In re the rude youth disposed to attack you with stones: My advice would be that you go to play in another quarter, and that generously you consider that the man may be just as much unbalanced in mind or as soured in disposition as some who in the language of Scripture, "Shoot out arrows, even bitter words, at the righteous." (`Psa. 64:3`.) On the whole I believe that those who throw literal stones are much less dangerous than some who are outwardly more decorous who have the "poison of asps under their lips" (`Rom. 3:13`), and who backbite, speak evil of and slander others--even the Lord's "brethren." Let us thank God that the time is coming when there will no longer be in the world any except those who have the "spirit of a sound mind"--the disposition of the Lord.-- `2 Tim. 1:7`.

Respecting your attendance at a gymnasium, and the hearing of lectures: It would seem to me that no evil need result from merely availing yourself of these privileges, and should advise that you do so, unless there would be something in the way of a bondage connected with this--some obligations--and quite likely there are none that would be objectionable in such a club. With much Christian love, Your brother and servant in the Lord, THE EDITOR.]

WATCH TOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY.

DEAR BRETHREN:--The Volunteer distribution of the booklets, **The Bible versus the Evolution Theory,** has been completed in the District of Columbia, after a campaign lasting seven months. 14 Volunteers-- brothers and sisters--visited 154 churches and distributed 10,934 booklets, besides other tracts. The congregations in the various churches varied all the way from 400 down, the

average attendance being 71.

This work was taken up in accordance with the offer made in TOWER of April 15th, '99, it being our desire in this manner to show our love and appreciation of the Lord and his truth--by engaging in a work which might result in the blessing of his true "brethren." The work has progressed with perfect harmony of hearts, hands and a willingness to serve in any channel, however humble, and has most evidently been under divine direction, for we have had many indications of providential guidance in selection of churches to be worked, etc.

We have been greatly blessed in this work which has given us many opportunities for letting our light shine for the Master,--upon some occasions the brethren being invited within the church building to explain the object of the visit and something of God's plan as testified to in the literature distributed. We were well received on the whole, notwithstanding some cases of opposition. We are thankful to God for these great privileges of serving his truth, and also to Brother Russell and the Tract Society as instruments in his hands. We are still "Volunteers," and ready to carry the good warfare into the adjacent towns with the booklets still on hand.

With love to all who are similarly engaged in the Volunteer work, Your fellow "Soldiers,"
THE CHURCH AT WASHINGTON, D.C.

::page 16::

MY DEAR BROTHER:--I am feasting on the wonderful and comprehensive subject of the atonement, as set forth in the new volume of DAWN. The more I

study and comprehend its beautiful harmony and reasonableness, the more I am constrained to lift up my heart in thankfulness to our loving Heavenly Father who has designed such a beautiful plan for the redemption of mankind. And so, as the marvelous light shines in my heart through the merit of Jesus Christ, I can constantly say, Praise God for the truth! Praise him for the wondrous things made known!

With much love in Christ and kindest wishes for your welfare, spiritual and temporal, I remain,

Your brother in the service of Immanuel,
JAMES McFARLAND,--**Colporteur.**

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:--Herewith I send you five dollars; after paying for enclosed order put balance into the Tract Fund--some of it is from my daughter. I have read the fifth volume of DAWN once, and am going over it a second time, finding the references. It is the best of the DAWN series, if there is any best to them; they are all so wonderful and grand! But I think the last one has the most meat in it, now due for the household of faith: I enjoy it so much, I do not know when to stop reading it. And some parts are so good. I read them over and over again, till I am **satisfied,** and thank God, our Father, that he has blessed Brother Russell with wisdom and understanding, to write things so plainly. May God continue to bless and keep you faithful unto death!

Your Sister, in hope of the coming Kingdom,
MRS. J. A. MARWOOD,--**Nebraska.**